

Natural Resources Committee has worked to strip one of the most outrageous provisions of the H.R. 6 conference report—the MTBE liability protection, which many Senators simply cannot abide—from the new version of his energy bill. But I am one of the many who believe that the bill that remains requires very, very substantial revision and thorough debate. With its origins in last year's conference report, there are far too many provisions in the new bill that the Senate Energy Committee has simply never considered. Moreover, if one of our primary policy goals is to improve the reliability of our nation's electricity grid, I am hard-pressed to see how many of the provisions in that bill are relevant.

How will weakening the Safe Drinking Water Act help keep the lights on?

Will providing MTBE producers with \$2 billion in taxpayer-funded "transition" assistance in any way reduce the likelihood of outages?

How would delaying Clean Air Act implementation in our nation's most polluted cities ensure reliable operation of our electricity grid?

Can anyone really argue that exempting oil companies from Clean Water Act requirements will make our high-voltage transmission lines more reliable?

S. 2095 might not subsidize Hooters, but there remain plenty of handouts to the polluters and corporate looters—none of which have anything to do with bolstering the reliability of our transmission infrastructure. And that's before a non-existent conference with the House, the Leadership of which has publicly expressed its complete disinterest in revisiting the provisions of H.R. 6 most objectionable to the Senate. In fact, I ask my colleagues to consider the following passage, published in the February 14, 2004 edition of CQ Today.

"You can't start carving out pieces of a deal you already made," said Frank Maisano, a lobbyist who represents several MTBE producers. "What the Senate does at this point is irrelevant. This is just a vehicle to get to conference." MTBE lobbyists—and perhaps our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol—believe that whatever the Senate does within the context of a debate on the new energy bill is "irrelevant." As the saying goes, "fool us once, shame on you. Fool us twice, shame on us."

So Mr. President, in view of the existing gridlock on comprehensive energy legislation, I believe the only responsible course is for this body to bring up and pass stand-alone electric reliability legislation. I reject the notion that passing comprehensive energy legislation—such as it is—is the sole path to improving the reliability of our nation's electricity grid. We can pass stand-alone reliability legislation. We've done it before. We can—and must—do it again. Good energy policy must not be held hostage to the bad, and I am pleased to begin the process

of placing the bill directly on the Senate calendar.

RULING AGAINST MICROSOFT

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my strong opposition to yesterday's ruling by the European Commission against the Microsoft Corporation.

While Arkansas is not the headquarters of the Microsoft Corp., we are keenly aware of the negative impact that the European Union's protectionist trade actions have on American business and our Nation's economic growth and job creation.

Time and time again, farmers and agribusiness in my state have been denied the opportunity to compete in the European market.

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I am dedicated to ensuring a level playing field with our trading partners.

This goal cannot be accomplished alone. It will require a multinational cooperative effort which developed countries like the United States and Europe must lead.

The EU's actions, specifically the one taken yesterday, are a significant step in the wrong direction.

I encourage the administration to continue to engage their European counterparts and demand a more cooperative effort.

I yield the floor.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, March 25 has very special meaning in Greek history. On this date 183 years ago, a small but resolute band of Greek patriots began the struggle to end the foreign domination that for nearly four centuries had oppressed and impoverished Greek lands. For 8 difficult years, resolute and courageous Greek patriots fought against tremendous odds to secure the liberty of their homeland. On this same date 30 years ago the military junta, which had seized power in 1967 and for 7 long years suppressed democratic institutions and civil rights, was brought down, and democracy was restored to the land of its invention. These two events, distant in time and nature as they are from one another, both mark milestones on the road to the vigorous and prosperous democracy that is Greece today.

Nearly 200 years ago, the United States and Greece were two young republics for whom the future was still uncertain. Inspired by democratic ideas in a world that was largely uncomprehending and hostile, both took on the formidable challenge of building viable democratic institutions. That shared commitment has endured. The United States and Greece have stood together in every major struggle for freedom and democracy: through two devastating World Wars, and through the long decades of the Cold War.

The Hellenic Republic was established in 1974. Since that time, Greece has built itself into a strong democracy, a vibrant economy, a regional leader and an ever more solid partner of the United States. Greece has reclaimed its leading role in the region, joining the European Community in 1981. In April 2003, the European Union, under the Greek presidency, signed the Accession Treaty to accept 10 new members in the ancient agora marketplace of Athens, that city serving once again as a cradle for democratic expansion.

Greece's democracy has flourished and prospered over the past 30 years. Recent elections have again demonstrated the stability and openness of the nation's political institutions. With the transfer of power from one party to another, a new generation of Greek leaders is emerging, a generation that promises to build on the strength of the existing relationship with the United States to develop new avenues of cooperation.

Today Greece is preparing for the 2004 Olympics. It is a matter of profound satisfaction for those of us of Greek ancestry that the Games this year are returning to their birthplace, and that Greece will play host to more than two million athletes and visitors from every corner of the world. In connection with the Olympic Games, Greece has undertaken structural improvements that are transforming Athens into a thoroughly cosmopolitan and modern city, and building facilities and infrastructure throughout the country. The investment Greece has made in connection with the Olympics holds out the prospect of a new era, for the people of Greece and visitors to Greece alike. The Games offer a splendid opportunity to present Greek achievements to the international community not only in sports but also in cultural, economic and political terms.

The founders of the American republic were ardent students of the classics, and they looked to the wisdom and experience of ancient Greece as they shaped our nascent political order. In turn, Greek patriots struggling to win independence in 1821 turned to the principles of the new American democracy as they sought to build their own new order. In today's turbulent world, the strong and enduring ties between the two countries are momentous achievements. They give us cause for reflection and celebration on this independence day.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 183rd anniversary of Greek Independence and pay tribute to the contributions of Greece and our Greek-American community. It was on this day in 1821, that Greek patriots rose up against the Ottoman empire and began an 8-year struggle that culminated in a new Greek Republic.

It is fitting that we take this day to reflect on the enormous contributions